

IPAS Priorities 2010 – 11

Abuse and Neglect — Freedom from abuse and neglect is a fundamental right. One of the primary purposes of IPAS is to work towards the elimination of abuse and neglect of individuals with disabilities.

Following are proposed objectives that IPAS staff will work towards completion to reduce abuse and neglect of individuals with disabilities:

Allegations are reviewed or ongoing investigations monitored to ensure that the allegation is reported to the responsible entities and those necessary actions are taken to protect the health, safety and welfare of individuals with disabilities.

Review allegations of abuse and neglect on behalf of individuals with disabilities, including developmental disabilities, mental illness, or traumatic brain injuries, residing in:

- Intermediate Care Facilities (ICF-MR),
- Indiana Department of Mental Health and Addictions operated mental health facilities,
- Comprehensive Mental Health Centers, and
- facilities funded by the Division of Children's Services.

Or those individuals that are

- receiving Medicaid waiver services, or
- individuals incarcerated in the Indiana Department of Correction prisons, county jails or juvenile detention facilities.

Represent individuals in their appeal of reduced Developmental Disability or Aged and Disabled waiver services when the alleged reduction in services will have a serious and negative impact on the health and safety of the individual, or when the reduction of services places the individual at risk of being placed in a more restrictive setting.

Review complaints on behalf of individuals with traumatic brain injury and take appropriate action to assure that state supported residential services (TBI waiver) that are provided through the Division of Disability, Aging, and Rehabilitation Services are provided in the least restrictive environment.

Investigate allegations of inappropriate use of seclusion/restraints on behalf of individuals residing in a treatment facility.

Review selected incidents of serious occurrences e.g. physical injury, of individuals residing in facilities designated as a psychiatric residential treatment facility (PRTF).

Represent individuals with a mental illness residing in the community and/or treatment facility to ensure that their complaints about medication or treatment are communicated to and fully addressed by the appropriate entity.

Monitor internal grievance complaints of individuals residing in state operated facilities to ensure that complaints are addressed according to written policy and procedure.

Monitor selected death investigations to document that an investigation was initiated and completed by the responsible state entity including individuals who resided in Indiana Department of Mental Health and Addictions operated mental health facilities.

Advocate for the adoption and implementation of rules by the Department of Education and/or each individual school system concerning the application and staff training regarding minimal standards that guide the use of restraint and/or seclusion.

Equal Access and Other rights — Individuals with disabilities must have access to programs, services, technology, polling places, buildings and housing.

Following are objectives that IPAS staff will work to complete in order to increase access to individuals with disabilities:

Review allegations of individual or systemic discrimination where services have been denied under the ADA (Titles 2 and 3), or Fair Housing.

Assist individuals with disabilities in obtaining assistive technology services and devices in the areas of education, health care, employment, community living and in the use of telecommunications.

Assist or represent individuals with disabilities in the grievance procedure set forth in the Indiana Help America Vote Act plan.

Monitor Work One Centers to identify those centers and services that are not accessible to individuals with disabilities or do not comply with disability rights and laws.

Participate as non voting members of Resident/Human Rights Committee of the facilities operated by the Indiana Department of Mental Health and Addictions.

Participate on selected committees, groups or task forces which appear to have systemic implications concerning policies and practices affecting the State's response to disability rights for individuals with disabilities.

Provide advocacy services for individuals who have allegedly been subjected to disability based discrimination when it is deemed that the case or situation may have systemic implications.

Special Education — Due to increased emphasis on school discipline, students with disabilities are at increased risk of termination or reduction of their educational services. Students, parents and advocates need information and support to enable them to effectively self advocate. There are also school systems that exhibit ongoing violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act and Article 7.

Following are objectives that IPAS staff will pursue in order to increase the number of special education students that receive a free and appropriate public education:

Review allegations on behalf of students where the school, due to a proposed or instituted change of educational placement or suspension or expulsion, has or will reduce educational services and advocate for the restoration of services provided in the least restrictive environment.

Review allegations that educational services have been inappropriately reduced on behalf of students detained in juvenile detention facilities and advocate for the restoration of services.

Develop and disseminate transition materials to transition aged students, aged 14 years through 22 years, in Indiana school districts.

Employment— Historically, individuals with disabilities have experienced a higher rate of unemployment or underemployment, which represents a significant barrier to achieving the level of independence and productivity that many people with disabilities wish to attain.

Following are objectives that IPAS staff will work to complete in order to increase the opportunity for individuals with disabilities to attain full employment:

Assure that eligible individuals receive appropriate service provided through Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) and Centers for Independent Living (CIL).

Assure that Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Centers for Independent Living applicants and clients have the opportunity to make informed choices and fully participate throughout the process.

Provide assistance and individual representation to Social Security beneficiaries who are seeking Vocational Rehabilitation Services, employment services and other support services from employment networks.

Provide consultation to and legal representation on behalf of Social Security Beneficiaries when such services become necessary to protect the rights of such beneficiaries.

Identify and correct deficiencies in employment networks providing vocational rehabilitation services, employment services and other support services to beneficiaries with disabilities.

Education and Training — Students, parents and advocates need information and support to enable them to effectively self advocate.

Following are objectives that IPAS staff will work to complete in order to increase awareness about disabilities rights and the exercise of those rights.

Provide education and training about disability rights and IPAS to individuals with disabilities, parents, guardians, advocates, and/or service program providers.

Support education and training efforts of consumer based organizations to increase awareness of disability rights.

Increase awareness of school staff responsible for identifying students with disabilities about the characteristics of pediatric traumatic brain injury.

Disseminate information regarding disability rights and IPAS at two events related to the provision of childcare for all children including children with developmental disabilities.

Advocate for the adoption and implementation of rules by the Division of Family and Children prohibiting restraint and seclusion in Children's Homes and Child Caring Institutions.

Conduct training events concerning the civil/disability rights of individuals with mental illness for family members.

Conduct resident rights training events for consumers at selected Comprehensive Mental Health Centers.

Participate in events related to fair housing and housing discrimination attended by consumers, family members and/or service providers.

Support the creation of a new Crisis Intervention Team program in an Indiana Law Enforcement entity.

Develop and distribute information concerning voter registration, access to polling places and the right to cast a vote, including information regarding the state's grievance procedure and the role of IPAS in representing individuals.

Continue development of website as an empowerment tool for individuals and families.

Respond to education, training and assistance requests to individuals with disabilities that will promote their participation in the electoral process.

Respond to requests by election officials, poll workers, and election volunteers regarding the rights of voters with disabilities and best practices in working with individuals with disabilities.

Respond to requests by governmental entities regarding the physical accessibility of polling places.

Provide education and training to increase the self-advocacy skills of individuals with disabilities, their families, and other advocates to enable them to obtain assistive technology services and devices.

Participate on the statewide Brain Injury Advisory Council.

Conduct one statewide conference regarding resident rights issues.

Information and Referral — The IPAS Commission continues to support the efforts of the staff to provide timely and accurate information about disability rights for individuals with disabilities, their families, as well as advocates, and members of the public.

Provide Information and Referral Services that are timely and contains accurate information to individuals concerning disability rights and provide technical assistance concerning the exercise of these rights.

Administration — IPAS strives to provide high quality advocacy services that are responsive to the needs of individuals with disabilities and their families.

Following are objectives IPAS staff will work to complete to increase awareness of IPAS and the advocacy services that are provided.

Assure the provision of high quality advocacy services.

Outreach to the public and to individuals with disabilities, concerning disability rights issues, IPAS services and successes.

Outreach to minority and underserved individuals with disabilities, concerning disability rights issues, IPAS services and successes.

Provide the public with opportunities to make comments and suggestions concerning agency priorities and objectives.

Recruit and maintain a pool of qualified and diverse individuals who are eligible for appointment to the Commission and its Mental Illness Advisory Council.